

LSD CREATOR SAYS ARMY SOUGHT DRUG

8-1-75
NYF

Asserts Military Asked How
to Mass-Produce It in '50's

By MICHAEL KNIGHT

Special to The New York Times

STORRS, Conn., July 31—Dr. Albert Hofmann, the Swiss chemist who invented LSD 32 years ago, said here today that he was repeatedly approached during the late nineteen-fifties by United States Army researchers looking for a way to mass produce large quantities of the mind-altering drug.

Dr. Hofmann said that he had never been told the reason for the Army's interest in the drug, but had assumed from the extremely large quantities being discussed that it was for weapons research.

"It was also common knowledge at the time that that's what they were interested in," he said.

Other LSD researchers, he added, have told him of being approached over the years by Russian agents looking for similar information.

Dr. Hofmann, who until his retirement last year was director of plant research at the Sandoz A.G. Pharmaceutical Company's laboratories in Basel, Switzerland, said that the Army was interested in finding a process that could produce "many kilos" of the drug.

A standard experimental dose, he said, was in the range of 250 to 300 micrograms, or millionths of a gram. A "kilo" is a kilogram, or 1,000 grams.

"The Army people came back many times, every two years or so, to see if any technological process had been made," Dr. Hofmann said after presenting a lecture on his discovery to a professional conference being held here at the University of Connecticut.

The visits stopped, he added, after other researchers succeeded in developing such a process in the early nineteen-sixties.

Experiments Acknowledged

Spokesmen for the Department of the Army have acknowledged administering doses of LSD ranging from five micrograms to 1,600 micrograms in experiments conducted on 585 soldiers and 900 civilians at Fort Detrick, Md., between 1955 and 1967. In addition, it is known that other

experiments with the drug were conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Air Force and a number of civilian agencies. The Army denied, however, that it had attempted to use LSD as a weapon, insisting instead that it was merely attempting to study the drug's effects and devise a defense against its possible use by an enemy.

Dr. Hofmann said he had not warned the Army researchers away from the drug despite his belief that it would be extremely dangerous if used improperly and despite his personal distaste for their work.

"I did not like it because I had perfected LSD for medical use, not as a weapon," he said. "It can make you insane or even kill you if it is not properly used under medical supervision."

"In any case, the research should be done by medical people and not by soldiers or intelligence agencies."

Dr. Hofmann was experimenting in April, 1943, with ergot, a chemical produced by fungus infections in rye kernels, when he noticed himself becoming dizzy and experiencing visual and auditory hallucinations.